

A most extraordinary speech for royal ears, accustomed to the sycophancy of the French court, to listen to. Protestantism, especially in the person of courtly bishops, as in England, might very well accord with adulation of royalty, but in Scotland, in the person of John Knox, it was decidedly outspoken and unbending towards the occupant of the throne. Even Mary's tears could not unman it, though the Laird of Dun was very sympathetic and had a bad quarter of an hour during the colloquy of his immovable colleague; and this tendency to defy royalty to its face, even in matters of State, rather than resile from rights and duties, was one of the contributions that John Knox made to the opposition of the future. Mary was not the only Scottish monarch of modern times who had cause to resent and wince at semi-political sermons. Such interference in matters political on the part of the Protestant kirkmen might not be tolerable on ordinary occasions. There were occasions when the pulpit worthily anticipated the press in the ventilation of opinion, and this might fairly be claimed to be one of them. For Mary to marry a papist like Don Carlos might well seem to Knox, and ought to have seemed to Moray and Maitland, the doom both of the Protestantism and the liberty of the commonwealth.

Mary had a chance of revenge sooner than she expected. Knox had occasionally interrupted his multifarious duties in the capital by a tour in the western and southern counties in order to encourage the Protestants and concert measures for united action against the evil day. In the autumn of 1563 it seemed as if the evil day had come. During a progress in the west the queen had mass said in the midst of the faithful, and her co-religionists in the palace of Holyrood had it said in her absence. This was too much for Knox's Edinburgh followers, who entered the palace chapel to protest against idolatry. Two of these disturbers of the peace were arrested, and Knox, who realised that their condemnation would be a severe blow to the cause, wrote a circular-letter convening the Protestants from all quarters to a demonstration in their favour. To call a public meeting for such a purpose was a risky step in those days. It might be construed into treason, and Knox was summoned before the council to answer to the